

**AMESBURY RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, September 29, 2021 @ 1:30 PM**  
**Amesbury Police Department Training Room**  
**19 School Street, Amesbury, Massachusetts**

**The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM.**

**In Attendance – Board Members:** Donna Cornoni; Craig Bailey; Bonniyo Kitchin; Angel Wills; David Van Dam  
**Retirement Administrator:** Kevin A. Caira

**Also in attendance for the purpose of a COLA Base presentation:** Board Actuary, Daniel Sherman.

Motion was made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by Craig Bailey to invert the order of business and discuss: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) base increase. Unanimous vote to begin with the agenda item, Old Business. Board Actuary Daniel Sherman provided a presentation addressing increasing the COLA base from \$12,000 to either \$13,000 - \$14,000 or \$15,000. The Board members discussed a wide range of issues which included the impact/cost of an increase to the City appropriation, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and how it effects the retiree at the bottom of the pension scale, assets continuing to do well, effect on the unfunded liability and will it push out the funding date of 2035 (it will not), review of the COLA base in surrounding communities, a historical perspective regarding the last COLA base increase, the benefit a COLA base increase would provide to the retirees and speculated inflation. The Board agreed that a COLA base increase is over due to the retirees. The Board discussed next steps that should be taken in order to present a COLA base increase recommendation to the Amesbury City Council in November. Motion made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by Angel Wills to present a COLA base increase from \$12,000 to \$14,000 with a \$13,000 alternative comparison. Unanimous vote to approve. Motion made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by Craig Bailey to revert back to the original agenda. Unanimous vote to approve.

New Member Enrollments

Motion made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by David Van Dam to accept the New Member Enrollment Forms for:

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Kristin M. Nelson, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Tara A. Seidel, Paraprofessional (No Enrollment Form/Notification to HR).

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Marianne E. Primack, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** MaryAnn DePolo, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Carol D. Bonura, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Sarah R. Morris, Paraprofessional

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Taylor P. Spinney, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Ashley P. Aprahamian, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Tara R. DiBurro, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Sharon L. Pirro, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Kimberley J. Thayer, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Charles W. Wright, III, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Lilia E. Griffin, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Candice J. Blair, Paraprofessional.

**City of Amesbury/School Department:** Caitlyn E. Kane, Paraprofessional.

Unanimous vote to approve.

Buybacks/Redeposits

The Board received a letter from the Essex Regional Retirement System (ERRS) regarding the acceptance of liability for Matthew C. Lavallee, Maintenance Foreman with the Amesbury Housing Authority. The ERRS voted to deny liability as the individual was not eligible for membership in their retirement system, did not remit contributions, and was not wrongfully excluded.

Board received a request from the State Board of Retirement to accept service liability for former employee Ruth Ann Early. She was employed from 02/13/1989 as a Mental Health Counselor at the Amesbury Hospital until its closing on 05/31/1993. Her funds in the amount of \$8,228.38 were rolled over. The amount of creditable service is 4 years and 3 months. Motion made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by Craig Bailey to accept service liability of 4 years and 3 months provided proper buyback deductions are made to the State Board of Retirement. Unanimous vote to approve.

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Refunds/Transfers

The Board received a transfer in from the State Board Retirement for Nicholas Cornoni. The total amount of creditable service is 1 year, 6 months and 18 days. The total amount of the transfer is \$9,200.84. Motion made by Angel Wills and seconded by David Van Dam to accept transfer. Unanimous vote to approve.

The Board received an Application for Withdrawal of Accumulated Total Deductions from William Brown, former Paraprofessional with the Amesbury School Department. He has 1 year and 5 months of creditable service. The amount of the refund would be \$3,284.10. Federal tax withheld would be \$656.82. Member would receive \$2,627.28. Member did not request a rollover. Motion made by Donna Cornoni and seconded by Bonniyo Kitchin to approve refund of accumulated total deductions. Unanimous vote to approve.

The Board received an Application for Withdrawal of Accumulated Total Deductions from Kevin M. Ward, Jr., former Custodian with the Amesbury School Department. He has 4 years and 9 months of creditable service. The amount of the refund would be \$25,172.26. Federal tax withheld would be \$5,034.45. Member would receive \$20,137.81. Member did not request a rollover. Motion made by Craig Bailey and seconded by Donna Cornoni to approve refund of accumulated total deductions. Board voted to approve: 4 in favor – 1 abstained. Bonniyo Kitchin abstained as this was her grandson.

Retirements

The Board received an Application for Voluntary Superannuation Retirement from Matthew C. Lavallee, Maintenance Foreman with the Amesbury Housing Authority. Mr. Lavallee is requesting retirement from Group 1 as of 10/29/2021. Motion made by David Van Dam and seconded by Donna Cornoni to accept application subject to calculation approval from the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC). Unanimous vote to approve.

The Board received an Application for Voluntary Superannuation Retirement from Kathleen Morrill, Secretary with the Amesbury School Department. Ms. Morrill is requesting retirement from Group 1 as of 11/01/2021. Motion made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by Angel Wills to accept application subject to calculation approval from the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC). Unanimous vote to approve.

The Board received an Application for Disability Retirement, Physician's Statement(s) and related documentation from the Law Offices of Nicole D. Sullivan for Ms. Heather Ryan, Paraprofessional with the Amesbury School Department. The Board is waiting to receive from the School Department the Employer's Statement Pertaining to an Application for Disability Retirement and a job description. Once these documents are received the process can proceed. The Board received Ms. Ryan's buyback deductions in the amount of \$4,050.85 for her employment 09/02/2015 to 08/31/2018. Motion made by Bonniyo Kitchin and seconded by Craig Bailey that Board received an Application for Disability Retirement for Heather Ryan. Unanimous vote on receipt of the disability application for Heather Ryan.

The Board received approval letters from PERAC through PROSPER for Theodore P. Stanwood, Retirement Date April 30, 2021; Sarah B. Seamans, Retirement Date May 29, 2021; Helen M. Nadeau, Retirement Date June 30, 2021; and Marjorie A. Walker, Retirement Date June 30, 2021.

The following Items were reviewed and approved:

- September 2021 Payroll Warrant.
- September 2021 Cash Disbursements Warrant.
- September 2021 Vendor Payment Warrant.
- August 2021 PRIT Report.
- August 2021 MM Bank Reconciliation.
- August 2021 Checking Account Reconciliation.
- August 25, 2021 Minutes.

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PERAC Memorandum that was reviewed:

PERAC #25.....September 23, 2021.....Tobacco Company List.

Correspondence

Email received August 24, 2021 from Stephan Georgacopoulos, Director of Northeast Markets for Pension Technology Group (PTG) regarding Employee Self Service Portal.

Email received dated September 02, 2021 from Francesco Daniele, Director of Client Services with the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) regarding rescheduling of the Amesbury Contributory Retirement System review of investments from Wednesday, September 29, 2021 to Wednesday, November 17, 2021.

The Board received a letter from PERAC dated September 09, 2021 regarding Section 3(8)(c) of Chapter 32 of the General Laws. Amesbury Retirement System shall reimburse the Essex Regional Retirement Board \$4,331.95 a year toward the retirement allowance of Susan Yeames, who retired December 31, 2020.

Email received September 14, 2021 from John W. Parsons, Esq., Executive Director of the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) advertising for interested applicants for the 7<sup>th</sup> Member of the Commission. Letter and resume must be submitted to PERAC no later than October 6, 2021.

Emails received September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> from Natacha Dunker, Communications Director with the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) regarding a webinar on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 from 10:00 AM to Noon for newer board members and staff. All are welcome to attend. Board members attending will receive three educational credits.

City of Amesbury Staff Newsletter received by email on 09/23/2021.

Email received September 24, 2021 from Mayor Kassandra Gove announcing the departure of Library Director Erin Matlin and Assistant Library Director Aimie Westphal as Interim Library Director.

The Board received four emails dated September 10, 13, 17, 24, 2021 from the Mass Retirees Association regarding a variety of topics including *Welcome Back, Fall Town Hall Meeting and Veto Override*.

New Business

Board to discuss: Pension Technology Group (PTG) Employee Self Service Portal for Member and Retirees. The Board discussed the merits of providing new technology for the active members and retirees to use for various information. A self-service portal would allow members and retirees the ability to view contact information, beneficiary information, service history, deductions & earnings, annuity savings balance, 1099R information and access to a variety of forms for updates. The cost to the System would be \$2,000 a year. The Board is requesting a demonstration at their October Board meeting.

Old Business

Board to discuss: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) base increase. This agenda item was voted to be taken up first at the beginning of this (September 29, 2021) Board meeting.

Next Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 27, 2021.

Discussion of topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours before the meeting.

Having completed all business, Motion made by David Van Dam and seconded by Angel Wills and voted unanimously to adjourn meeting at 2:50 PM.